

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes
September 19, 2007**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
J.R McCollister	Public Member
Ed Anchordoguy	California Wool Growers Association
Chuck Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Tracy Schohr	California Cattlemen's Association
Ron Eng	CDFA
Larry Bezark	CDFA
Eric Huff	Board of Forestry & Fire Protection
Diana Brink	BLM

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. Introductions of all present were made. Items were not taken in order.

Item 3, Review of the July 2007 Minutes:

Revisions to the minutes were noted by Jeff Stephens. Clancy Dutra made the motion to pass with revisions noted. Mike Connor seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Item 5, Discussion: Problems Associated with Invasive Weed Control Common to other States. Opportunities to Interface with CDFA and the Forest Pest Council

Ken Zimmerman opened the discussion with Larry Bezark and Ron Eng with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). He stated that his reasons for bringing the matter before RMAC was based on his recent experience while visiting with the Florida Department of Agriculture and reviewing their program for invasive weed control. He stated that acres treated and public support are impressive. He further stated that initially the Florida Legislature did not provide for appropriate funding which was turned down by the program proponents as being less than adequate for a sufficient program. They then turned to other sources the following year (NGO, Federal, and

private) which contributed substantial amounts in support of the program. The State Legislature then came on board with significantly higher amounts of funding. The budget is currently \$100 million. There is also an MOU identifying only one state agency for supervision of funds and determining which lands are treated. They also purchase land as buffer strips to prevent spread. He suggested it as a worthy model for California to look at.

Larry Bezark joined the discussion and identified himself as the CDFA Assistant Director for the Plant Health and Pest Prevention Division. He provided a summary of his organization. Larry Bezark stated that prevention of infestation is becoming increasingly difficult with all the international transport of goods and military equipment that may or may not be washed down after returning from overseas. The weed program is funded at about \$800,000 and reflects a 50% cut that occurred 3 years ago. The bio-control agents program also took a 50% cut. The argument has always been whether the state wishes to cut the weed program or cut an insect control program such as med fly that attacks many hosts. Currently State Government is going through a general fund cut exercise in anticipation of a budget deficit.

Larry Bezark stated that they do work closely with NGOs. They secured \$1.5 million for the weed management areas (WMA) with the help of NGOs. Field Biologists such as Ron Eng have also been reduced from 16 to 5 in the State.

CDFA's approach for funding has been to take any funding that comes rather than turn it down as in the Florida case. They have informed the legislature on some occasions that funding will only provide for a partial program rather than fully provide for a complete program in pest control. He recommended that BCPs be on the table and ready to go in the event of a change in attitude towards funding a program. But he does not foresee a change in the near future.

Chuck Pritchard asked if CDFA has taken a position on the open border issue with trucks coming into the State. Larry Bezark stated he was not aware of any official position that the Secretary has taken.

Ken Zimmerman brought up other issues for consideration. One issue is the founding of a State Invasive Species Council. Larry Bezark stated that an attempt was made several years ago but the Governor declined to issue the executive order that would have created the council. It became clear that funding would have to come from existing budgets that would have been detrimental to existing programs. CDFA does not support this strategy. Out of this effort came the Invasive Weeds Action Plan. A symposium was also held as part of the Plan development. Something similar was contemplated for the Invasive Weeds Council. The current situation is that the symposium is still a viable option but funding of a Council is still an unmet need.

Ken Zimmerman brought up the Florida example again stating that they have service providers pre-identified so that when a project need develops a service provider can be assigned quickly. There is no long contracting process to get work done.

Ken Zimmerman invited Mike Connor to brief the group on conversations he has had with Caltrans on weed control. Mr. Connor stated that representative from Caltrans have been approached on their policy for cleaning equipment between job sites, and that

RMAC will be pursuing the issue in the future. Ken Zimmerman stated that RMAC intends to pursue the issue through their advisory capacity with CDFA.

Ron Eng used the discussion on Caltrans to open discussion on CDFA having an opportunity to influence timber harvest plans (THP) when there are known occurrences of list A invasive plants. Spotted knapweed that was disclosed by Southern California Edison is an example. Ken Zimmerman suggested that a more appropriate approach would be to work through the Forest Pest Council that is advisory to the Board of Forestry. Scott Carnegie advised that The DFG is currently dealing with noxious plants as a Review Team member. Larry Bezark recommended that CDFA approach DFG on cooperating with control measures. Susan Ellis was mentioned as a DFG contact.

Item 4, Status Review of the Paper: *Integrating Natural Resource Management in California with Resource Conservation Investments*:

Ken Zimmerman confirmed that some comments were received from public on the paper. Jeff Stephens distributed the comment to RMAC and public present. Ken Zimmerman asked Jeff Stephens to review the distribution that was generated. He stated that the best source of relevant persons came from the Cattlemen's Association. Ken Zimmerman asked that a copy of the distribution be provided to all RMAC members. Mike Connor stated that it would be advisable to stress that RMAC is looking for recommendations. Jeff Stephens reviewed the notice that was put out and agreed to stress the point.

Chuck Pritchard noted that promoting the wise use or management of public lands with grazing is problematic in that grazers need flexibility for scheduling and the duration of grazing. He cited a recent GLCI meeting in Casper Wyoming where the same point was raised with federal land managers. Federal managers he spoke with agreed with Mr. Pritchard on the need for skilled federal rangeland managers that have the expertise to manage grazing programs. He further stated that private sector managers that are successful should be used by federal agencies as models for good rangeland management.

At Ken Zimmerman's request Jeff Stephens reviewed personal contact with Jay Chamberlin with the Resources Agency regarding the draft paper. Mr. Stephens indicated that he spoke with Jay by phone and discussed history, intent and RMAC objectives by writing the draft paper. Ken Zimmerman expressed a desire to engage with Resources at higher levels of management. Tracy Schohr advised that a meeting with Mr. Chamberlin is advisable since he is the primary point of contact for RMAC. Ken Zimmerman stated that he would make contact with Mr. Chamberlin to solicit his input and concerns.

Item 6 An Overview of the BLM Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Management:

Diana Brink opened discussion and passed out CD's with the complete document. The final EIS was released at the end of May and BLM began analyzing comment in July 2007. BLM has been operating under two EIS documents for the western states since about 1985. One is for California specifically and the other is for the remaining western states. The objective of this EIS is to add 4 new formulations, allow adding new formulations as they are developed in the market place by performing some minor analysis, and describe best management practices (BMP) for the application of herbicides. BLM is expecting a record of decision (ROD) very soon.

There has been discussion of potential litigation but nothing specific at this point. Diana Brink pointed out that California is unique in that BLM has a MOU with the Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) stating that BLM will only use chemicals in California that are approved by DPR. She also pointed out that some BLM offices use herbicides and some do not.

Ron Eng cited an example where policies of adjoining properties can impact control methods. For example, since not all BLM offices use herbicides control methods change with jurisdiction (i.e. hand grubbing on one side of the fence and herbicides on the other). JR McCollister asked if a decision to not use herbicide may be appealed. Diana Brink stated that such an appeal would have to be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

Item 7 Agency and Association Reports:

BLM Diana Brink Reporting:

Ms. Brink began with the recent court ruling by the 9th Circuit Court in Idaho that enjoined all new grazing regulations. The plaintiff is Western Watersheds Project. The ruling requires BLM to revert back to the 1995 regs with some minor modifications. The decision may be found in Court Order CB-052297-EBLW. The issue of the lawsuit was that new grazing regulations limited public input in that the right to submit comment would have required active participation with individual grazing allotments such as participating in the EA process. The court found that public comment may not be restricted in this manner.

Chuck Pritchard asked about new legislation that BLM is seeking for issuing grazing permits. Diana Brink stated that there is new legislation that allows the issue of a Categorical Exclusion if there is no change in the management of the allotment. She cautioned that they still must examine the 12 extraordinary circumstances that are required by NEPA in order to grant the Exclusion.

Diana Brink stated that California BLM is focusing on completion of the grazing permit renewal process. The target date is Sept 30, 2009. She believes that they may be able to complete them by the end of 2008.

Mel Thompson brought up the comparison of permitting for livestock use with off road vehicle use on federal land. He noted that environmental impacts to grazing are often cited by opponents to grazing but that for political reasons the environmental impacts to off road use is not considered. Does BLM have the courage to stand up and cite the environmental impacts of off road use? He has not heard of restriction to off road use due to environmental damage. Diana Brink stated that they have restricted use in some cases, and they have recreational use only areas that confine the use.

Ken Zimmerman asked how many grazers are working under the Joint Cooperative Management Agreement. Diana Brink stated they presently have only 4 proposed Agreements, and is not certain why there are so few. Chuck Pritchard stated that lack of participation may be due to so many different monitoring systems.

California Cattlemen's Association Tracy Schohr Reporting:

Tracy Schohr stated that the Range Improvement Committee is going to hold a range management workshop focused at the Grassland Reserves Program. They are hoping for additional funding and changes to the program that provides greater assistance to ranchers. They plan to meet with Senators Feinstein and Boxer's staff seeking their support.

They are also working with the Resources Agency to open more State owned property to grazing. Certain state properties are being looked at along with monitoring programs that may be used to evaluate impacts in a scientific manner.

CCA is following AB 32 as to its impacts and opportunities for ranchers. It may be a potential source of revenue for ranchers through their management practices. Ken Zimmerman recommended that Tracy Schohr contact Doug Wickizer on carbon sequestration. Jeff Stephens will send the contact information to Ms. Schohr.

The Rangeland Coalition has been interfacing with National Conference on Agriculture and the Environment. Chuck Pritchard has agreed to be a landowner representative at this conference.

CCA is also following any developments on nonpoint source pollution from non-irrigated agricultural land. Currently there has been little to no activity from the State Water Board. Ken Zimmerman brought up the importance of source testing when assigning responsibility for E. coli contamination. Tracy Schohr agreed and cited work by Tate that is ongoing in the state for source testing.

JR McCollister asked if Tracy Schohr had heard anything about a lawsuit filed in the central valley that would have required individual land owners to monitor for water quality versus coalition monitoring for non point source pollution. She stated there was a hearing last week that included both state and regional water quality personnel. Ms. Schohr stated that she was not well versed on the litigation but could ask a coworker for more information.

CDFA Ron Eng Reporting:

Ron Eng stated that he did not have much more to add other than he is trying to strengthen his contacts on the issue of invasive weeds and timber harvest plans. The contact with Scott Carnegie and CAL FIRE at this meeting will be helpful.

JR McCollister asked if Mr. Eng knew of other practices that companies such as Southern California Edison employ to prevent the spread of noxious weeds independent of the previous THP example. Mr. Eng stated he is not familiar with any additional practices beyond THP preparation.

Item 8 Focus Group Reports:

Rangeland Focus Group Mike Connor Reporting:

Mike Connor stated that the noxious weed issue and Caltrans was discussed and a Caltrans representative is desired at the next meeting to further discuss the policy if any for both Caltrans and Caltrans' contractors. Jeff Stephens will make the contact with Caltrans

and extend the invitation. He will also check with CAL FIRE and ask if there is a policy of the same type. Mike Connor asked Jeff Stephens to contact a member of the California Agricultural Commissioners to attend the next meeting. Jeff Stephens agreed to make the contact.

Mike Connor stated that the letter submitted to Barbara Allen-Diaz on Draft Policy 12 was discussed. Ken Zimmerman was asked to attend the upcoming meeting with the Cal-Pac Section of the Society of Range Management (SRM) in November to solicit comment on the Policy. To date Ms. Diaz has not responded to the RMAC letter.

A more formal method for documenting CRM continuing education credits was discussed. It was decided to model the procedure after the National SRM data base; however, this system is not fully operational as of this date. Ken Zimmerman asked if Tracy Schohr received a copy of the letter sent to Barbara Allen-Diaz. She did not and Jeff Stephens provided a copy.

Mike Connor stated that Eric Huff used RMAC's comments and incorporated them into a second Draft Policy 12. He passed the new draft out and asked for RMAC to consider for adoption. Chuck Pritchard moved to adopt the letter with minor modifications as noted in discussion. Ed Anchordoguy seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Mike Connor recommended that the Draft Policy 12 be circulated with the Cal-Pac SRM Certification Panel at the November meeting. With agreement from the Panel he assumes that the Policy would then be ready to forward to the Board's Policy Committee.

Mel Thompson reported that at the last meeting of the California Wool Growers Association (CWGA) that he and Ed Anchordoguy were successful with getting a resolution through that CWGA officially recognizes the CRM Program. Ken Zimmerman asked that Mel Thompson provide RMAC with a copy of the resolution. Mr. Thompson agreed.

Other business included a recommendation that Bill Frost be nominated by RMAC for service on the Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC). Mike Connor so moved; Clancy Dutra seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group JR McCollister Reporting:

JR McCollister confirmed per the comments made by Pam Giacomini that the Board still intends to move ahead with a complete evaluation of the Department's Vegetation Treatment Programs and not just focus on the Vegetation Management Program (VMP). He also recommended to Board Member Giacomini that the Department use CAL FIRE field staff on a temporary assignment to complete the task in a more expeditious manner. Time and staff seem to be a problem. Board Member Giacomini took the recommendation under advisement. The Focus Group also received a status on the Vegetation Treatment Program EIR.

JR McCollister reviewed the proceedings of the Board's Resource Protection Committee (RPC) meeting of November 11th. Some internal reports were identified that may assist with the internal review of vegetation treatment programs. The information was described as somewhat incomplete but may help with the process.

JR McCollister stated that the USFS has just released a report on the Angora Fire. He cited comment from Board Member Tom Walz taken from the report indicating that what is

needed is a more comprehensive fuels management program in the wild land areas and not just in the urban interface. Mr. McCollister noted that these statements from Board Member Walz are in agreement with RMAC's position regarding fuels management. In the aftermath of the Angora Fire the Governor has formed the Tahoe Commission for the Review of Fuels Management and Policy for the Basin (title is an approximation). This commission may have an impact on actions taken by the Board regarding the Basin. George Gentry has prepared a white paper that contains all regulations that may impact fuels management in the Basin in anticipation of future actions required by the Board. Eric Huff distributed a list of the Commission members named by the Governor.

Chuck Pritchard noted a publication presented at the Western Regional National Association of Conservation Districts meeting by the Lake Tahoe and Nevada Resource Conservation District. It illustrates assistance from the RCD for the design of projects that manage fuel and other natural resource problems on private property. He suggested that the Governor's Task Force consider this service as a part of the solution for managing fuels. JR McCollister recommended giving the document to George Gentry for consideration. Eric Huff accepted a copy for viewing by George Gentry.

Ken Zimmerman inquired whether JR McCollister could provide a summary of findings by the two RMAC reviewers for the VTP EIR at that next meeting. JR McCollister stated that he could do this at the regular meeting of RMAC versus a Focus Group meeting.

Item 9 Status Report Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report

RMAC agreed that the topic had been addressed adequately during previous discussion with the Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group.

Item 10, New and Unfinished Business:

Mel Thompson asked what the relationship of Bill Frost is to the RMAC; does he report to RMAC; do we address questions concerning the CRM exam through Mr. Frost? Ken Zimmerman stated that he would not be reporting to RMAC; RMAC is simply making the nomination. Mike Connor clarified that RMAC's communications with the PFEC would be through Eric Huff. Eric Huff stated that Mr. Frost would be representing Certified Rangeland Managers (CRM) and that it would be appropriate for him to interface with RMAC and the Certification Panel. But his responsibility lies with the PFEC. He further recommended that an RMAC member appear at the PFEC meetings. Eric Huff asked if RMAC wanted the Draft Policy 12 circulated to all CRMs. RMAC declined at this point stating they prefer to circulate to the Certification Panel first.

Item 11, Public Comment:

NONE

Adjourn